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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: ELECTION RESULTS IN KIEN GIANG; ONE VIETNAMESE WINNER DISQUALIFIED; CAMBODIAN BUDDHISTS PROTEST AGAINST WINNER OF CAMBODIAN SEAT.

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REF: A) SAIGON 9421; B) SAIGON 8365; C) SAIGON 7297 D) SAIGON 9634

1. SAIGON POST NOVEMBER 2 REPORTS SPECIAL COURT OF KIEN GIANG PROVINCE HAS ANNULLED ELECTION TO LOWER HOUSE OF CANDIDATE TA NGOC MAI AND SENTENCED HIM TO THREE MONTHS IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF 20,000 VN. FOUR OTHERS

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ASSOCIATED WITH MAI IN THE CAMPAIGN WERE ALSO CONVICTED FOR VIOLATION OF THE ELECTION LAW. NEWS ACCOUNT STATED THAT ALMOST 40 WITNESSES TOLD COURT MAI HAD USED "ARMED PRESSURE" ON VOTERS. ALLEGED PRESSURE ON VOTERS WITNESSED BY PROVINCE JUDGE HUYNH NMANH TRUNG ON ELEC- TION DAY VISIT TO VOTING BOOTH IN KIEN TAN DISTRICT.
2. COMMENT: ARTICLE 42 OF LOWER HOUSE ELECTION LAW GOVERNS VALIDATION OF THOSE WINNERS WHO HAVE RUN AFOUL OF ELECTION LAW. WE DO NOT KNOW UNDER WHAT PROVISION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION LAW (TO WHICH ARTICLE 42 OF LOWER HOUSE ELECTION LAW REFERS) MAI WAS CONVICTED. IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT CONVICTION WAS EITHER
UNDER ARTICLE 38 (INTIMIDATION OF VOTERS) OR ARTICLE 40 (CARRYING A WEAPON INTO

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POLLING PLACE). IF MAI WAS CONVICTED UNDER ARTICLE 38 AND DOES NOT APPEAL SUCCESSFULLY, THEN IT WOULD SEEM UNLIKELY THAT HE WILL BE ALLOWED TO TAKE HIS SEAT AND A NEW ELECTION WILL BE CALLED FOR WITHIN THREE MONTHS. IF, MAI WAS CONVICTED UNDER ARTICLE 40, AS SEEMS TO US MORE LIKELY IN VIEW OF THE RELATIVELY LIGHT FINE IMPOSED, THEN HE WILL PROBABLY BE ALLOWED TO COME TO SAIGON AND ARGUE HIS CASE BEFORE THE LOWER HOUSE ITSELF WHICH WILL, IN THAT EVENT, DETERMINE WHETHER HE IS EVENTUALLY TO BE SEATED. ALSO NOTEWORTHY IS FACT THAT MAI IS CATHOLIC WHILE JUDGE TRUNG IS BUDDHIST WITH RUMORED LINKS TO AN QUANG FACTION. TRUNG FOUGHT UNSUCCESSFULLY TO KEEP TWO BUDDHIST MILITARY PERSONNEL IN RACE WHO WERE EVENTUALLY DENIED LEAVE (SEE REFTELS). END COMMENT
3. ON OCTOBER 25 APPROXIMATELY 200 CAMBODIAN BUDDHISTS REPORTEDLY REPRESENTING SEVEN LOCAL PAGODAS DEMON- STRATED IN FRONT OF KIEN GIANG PROVINCIAL HEADQUARTERS TO PROTEST ELECTION OF DANH CUONG TO KIEN GIANG'S CAMBODIAN SEAT. THEY COMPLAINED CUONG BOUGHT VOTES

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AND THAT SOME OF HIS BALLOTS BORE EMBLEM OF DANH THU,
CANDIDATE FAVORED BY LEADING CAMBODIAN MONK DANH BAO.
DEMONSTRATORS DEMANDED ANOTHER ELECTION. PROVINCE
CHIEF PROMISED TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS. LOCAL ELECTION COUNCIL
CONSIDERED THE COMPLAINTS AND REJECTED THEM.
4. COMMENT: PROTEST NOT SURPRISING SINCE CUONG PROBABLY
WON ON STRENGTH OF SUCCESSFUL APPEAL TO VIETNAMESE
VOTERS IN KIEN GIANG. LOSING CAMBODIAN CANDIDATE,
CA DEPUTY DANH THU, WAS SECRETARY TO MONK DANH BAO
WHO HAS PROVEN ACTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE POLITICIAN. BUNKER

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